

Theological

A

DISSERTATION

ON

Liberty *and* Necessity :

WHEREIN

The Process of IDEAS, from their first Entrance into the Soul, until their Production of Action, is delineated.

With some REMARKS upon the late Reverend Dr. CLARKE's Reasoning on this Point.

AND AN

Epistle Dedicatory to TRUTH.

Amicus PLATO, *Amicus* SOCRATES, *sed magis*
Amica VERITAS.

By A. C. Esq;

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DISSENTATION

ON

THE PROGRESS OF THE ART OF THE
MANUFACTURE OF THE
SECTION OF THE

EPIDEMIC DISEASES



AND

BY

LONDON

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1825



Epistle Dedicatory
TO
T R U T H.

Most Noble Patroness,

YOU have been long
famed in the World,
and courted by Mul-
titudes, but few are
happy in your Enjoyment. The
greatest part of your slender Re-
tinue are such Rebels to your
A 2 Favours,

Favours, that they make a *Prostitute of You* ; and should we credit their various Reports, there is not so inconsistent a thing in the Universe ; You are not only diverse in different Parts of the World, in *England* a Christian, at *Constantinople* a Mahometan, &c. but in the same Country, nay in the same individual Person, and almost at the same Instant, a Contradiction to yourself. In short, many are tempted to doubt whether you have an Existence, but this I would not indulge myself to question ; since by annihilating You, I despoil myself of an Object which affords me ever new Delight. 'Tis a great Misfortune that you, who are a Blessing to all that know

Dedication.

know you, should be so little honoured, and unworthily conversed with, by Mankind ; but You live a recluse Life, and are so hard of Access, that the generality of them despair approaching you with Success ; and the Few who penetrate your Retirements monopolize you, and parcel out your Favours with so sparing an Hand, and too often in such an Hieroglyphick and Metamorphos'd Dress, that you still remain in ambiguous Obscurity. Your Retailers too frequently impose you on the Ignorant, under the Model which best suits their Profit or Pleasure ; and the greedy and unthinking Multitude (to the great Injury of You and themselves) receive

Error

Error in your stead. The Inhabitants of this lower World love you so little, and themselves so much, that I fear your genuine Splendor will always be transmitted to us through the false Mediums of Interest and Passion. These Male-practices, *Heaven be praised!* are not universal. There are some, who inspired by a laudable Zeal for your Service, and Love to their Fellow-Creatures, exert their utmost to display your Glories to publick Advantage. Amongst the meanest of these generous Benefactors, Your Votary humbly endeavours to contribute towards your Discovery. I am persuaded your Sanction hath erroneously been stamp'd on the
Doctrine

Dedication.

vii

*Doctrine of Free-Will, to the
manifest Abuse of your Sacred
Dignity, as I shall attempt to
prove ; and remain,*

Most Noble Patroness,

Your Devoted Worshipper,

and Advocate.



Dedication of Free-Will, to the
 manifest Abuse of your Sacred
 Dignity, as I shall attempt to
 prove; and remain,

Most Noble Patrons,

Your Devoted Worshipper,

and Advocate.



DISSERTATION

O N

Liberty *and* Necessity.

IT seems strange, that this Subject, which hath been so long and learnedly controverted, should have receiv'd no Demonstration, convincing enough to gain universal Assent to either side of the Question, *Is Man an Agent, or Patient?* I apprehend the principal Reason to be, That 'tis a Point of such a nature, as no one who does not enter the Lists and examine for himself, can

B con-

consistently determine, and few have so ardent a Thirst after Truth, as to force their way through the Thorns which surround it. The Multitude sit down, content with an implicit Faith, in what those they chuse for Preceptors teach them; but surely the Deity hath not invested us with the Faculty of Reasoning to lie dormant, but that it might be exercised in the Search after *Truth*; and I believe it more laudable to fail in that Pursuit, than slavishly to acquiesce in the unexamin'd Opinions of others.

That no Ambiguity may arise in the following Dissertation, I shall, as I proceed, define all the Terms used in it; and tho' by my Prolixity in some Particulars, I incur the Censure of learned Metaphysicians, I beg their Excuse, since my Intention thereby is to render my Arguments as intelligible as may be, to those who would not readily discern the Truth of more concise and abstracted Reasoning.

Method.

I shall attempt to solve the Point of Free Will, by tracing the Progress of the Soul

LIBERTY and NECESSITY.

8

Soul through all its Operations which we are conscious of, and examining in each whether 'tis *Active* or *Passive*.

The Soul is so constituted, as to be affected by *Material Objects*.

That the *Soul* is acted upon by *Matter* is past doubt, tho' we know not the precise manner of the Operation; which is not at all to be wonder'd at, since we are Strangers to many Qualities of *Matter*, and wholly in the dark as to the Substance of the Soul: Our most abstracted Conceptions can't furnish us with an Affirmative Idea of *Substance Immaterial*; but our Inability to account for Multitudes of Effects from the known Qualities of *Matter*, is, I think, the sole Reason we impute them to any thing else.

To the Consciousness of the Soul that *Sensation*, it is acted upon by *Matter*, we give the Name *Sensation*.

The Soul is apparently *Passive* in *Sensation*, which is the immediate result of *Sensation*.
The Soul is
Passive in
Sensation.
an

LIBERTY *and* NECESSITY.

an Object's affecting the Soul, which Affection in any instant of time is as inevitably determined in regard to its manner, as the Modes of Matter: to deny this were to assert, that two Particles of Matter might be in the same Place at the same time,

Reflection.

The Soul is endued with a Faculty of reviewing the various Sensations and Ideas which it hath experienced, or at least so many of them as are stored in its Repository the *Memory*, whether they concern *Material Objects*, or the *Operations of the Soul*. This Faculty, when reduced into Act, we call *Reflection*.

*Soul Passive
in Reflection.*

That the *Soul is Passive in Reflection* may be proved from its being the immediate Consequence of past *Sensations* affecting the Soul, whose instantaneous Modes are likewise determined in the Soul's recognizing them, as they were at their first Entrance into it. *Reflection* is in reality no other than *Consciousness*; which, when 'tis exercised about *Material Objects*, is termed *Sensation*; and when
on

LIBERTY and NECESSITY.

3

on *Ideas, Reflection*. If this Proof that the *Soul is Passive in Reflection* were defective, an Appeal to each Individual's Experience will be a Demonstration to him. Does any one voluntarily recall into his mind Ideas that destroy his Quiet? Do they not forcibly obtrude on him? Or can he at pleasure exchange a Train of distracting Thoughts, for a Succession of such as will afford him Delight. If not, adieu Freedom of *Reflection*!

We cannot adequately explain how I-*Memory*. Ideas of *Sensation* and *Reflection* are retained in the Soul, nor does it affect the Point in dispute, seeing that in the retentive Faculty, which is called *Memory*, the Soul is universally allow'd to be *Passive*.

The Soul being by means of *Sensation* and *Reflection* furnish'd with the Materials, about which its other Faculties of *Reasoning*, and *Judging*, are exercis'd,

By *Reasoning*, the Ideas of which the *Memory* is possess'd, or which at that <sup>*Reasoning and Judg-
ing.*</sup> time

LIBERTY and NECESSITY.

time occupy the Soul, are assembled into Intellectual Images or Propositions, on which the *Judgment* is exercis'd in discriminating the similar and unlike Parts of them, from thence drawing Consequences and determining the Propriety or Unfitness, Truth or Falshood of any Proposition or Action then in view.

Soul Passive in Reasoning and Judging. That the *Soul is Passive in Reasoning and Judging*, appears from the Consideration, that in their respective Functions of compiling Propositions, and determining the Relations which their constituent Parts bear to each other, the past *Sensations and Reflections* (which have been demonstrated necessary) are their Standard: The *Judgment* only assents that this is like or unlike that, which Assent the Soul can't force, in contradiction to the Appearance of the Proposition. The Soul in contemplating the Truth of any Proposition, can only have in view the several Modes under which the Parts of it have been at some time united or sever'd in the Mind. These Ideas are the Maxims from whence our Reasonings are deduced, and
if

LIBERTY *and* NECESSITY.

7

if they make false Appearances in the Soul, we can at best but reason right from wrong Principles, and our Conclusions are consequently erroneous. The Soul can no more set right its own Misapprehensions of things in any one Instant, than it can frame an Idea of the particular Sensation that would arise from a sixth Sense to be superadded to the Body; and the reason in both cases is the same, it is possess'd of nothing from whence it can have aid. The Soul does indeed frequently contradict the credit of the Senses as to the Appearances of Material Objects in respect of their Figure, Sight, Colour, &c. but even in that Contradiction it judges of the Truth or Falshood of the Representation, from the Appearance that Object then makes in the Soul, compared with those it formerly made, or from some Ideas lodged in the Soul, of the nature of that Object, when the Organs of Sense were (or are supposed to have been) more perfect. This is exactly the case with the Soul. Its Judgment concerning the Truth of any Proposition, is determined from a comparison of the Assemblage

LIBERTY and NECESSITY.

semblage of Ideas that constitute it, each with the other, and referring them to some establish'd Standard in the Mind, from whence they receive the Sanction of True, or are exploded as Erroneous.

Though the Contenders for *Liberty* in Man, won't scruple to admit that the *Last Judgment of the Understanding is Necessary*, I thought proper to premise, and delineate, the Process of Ideas, to the last *Judgment*, since it greatly enlightens the subsequent part of the Argument.

Objection. The Assertors of *Free Will* say, that tho' the *Last Judgment of the Understanding be necessitated, yet there is a Freedom of Action*; and thus the late Reverend and Learned Dr. *Clarke*, a potent Champion in the Cause, explains, and endeavours to prove it.

“ Judging (says the Doctor) is one
 “ thing, and Acting is another. They
 “ depend upon Principles totally different
 “ from each other, and which have no
 “ more Connection than Activeness and
 “ Passive-

“ Passiveness. Neither God nor Man
“ can avoid seeing that to be true, which
“ they see is true ; or judging that to
“ be fit and reasonable, which they see is
“ fit and reasonable. But in all this
“ there is no Action, any more than
“ God’s being omnipresent (which de-
“ pends not on his Will) can be said to
“ be a Divine Act. The Physical Power
“ of Acting, which both in God and
“ Man is the Essence of Liberty, conti-
“ nues exactly the same after the last
“ Judgment of the Understanding as be-
“ fore. For example, it appears from
“ several Promises (suppose) that ’tis at
“ this Instant, the last Judgment of the
“ Divine Understanding, that ’tis not rea-
“ sonable the World should be destroy’d
“ this Day. Does it follow from thence,
“ that God’s Physical Power of destroying
“ it is not exactly the same this Day, as it
“ will be at any time hereafter? The
“ Sum is this : There is no Connection
“ between Approbation and Action ; be-
“ tween what is Passive, and what is
“ Active. The Spring of Action is not
“ the Understanding ; for a Being inca-
C pable

“ pable of Action, might nevertheless be
 “ capable of Perception : But the Spring
 “ of Action is the Self-Motive Power,
 “ which is (in all Animals) Spontaneity,
 “ and (in rational ones) what we call
 “ Liberty. All Error in this Matter has
 “ (I think) arisen from Men’s using the
 “ word Will in a confus’d Sense, to ex-
 “ press (indistinctly) partly what is Pas-
 “ sive, and partly what is Active. If the
 “ Final Perception of the Understanding,
 “ and the Operation, or Exertion of the
 “ Active Faculty, or Self-Motive Power,
 “ were connected by a true Physical Ne-
 “ cessity, there would remain no diffe-
 “ rence between Action and Passion ;
 “ but this only, that what we now call
 “ an Agent, would erroneously imagine
 “ itself to be an Agent, when in reality
 “ it was merely Passive. Nay indeed
 “ there would be no such thing as an A-
 “ gent or Action in the Universe. Nei-
 “ ther Man, nor Angel, nor even God
 “ himself, would act in any other Sense
 “ than a Ballance determined on one side
 “ by an Overplus of Weight ; supposing
 “ it indued with *Perception* or *Under-*
 “ *standing.*”

The

The foregoing Sentiments collected from Dr. *Clarke*, are, if I mistake not, the Fundamentals from whence all his Reasoning against the Necessity of Human Actions are deduced, which (with the utmost Deference to the Authority of that Great Man) I think will be obviated by the following Considerations.

Judging, and *Action*, are without doubt *First*. as different as *Action* and *Passion*. But I conceive the Doctor here begs the Question, by asserting a *Self-Motive Power* in the Soul without proving it, and then reasoning from it as granted him. He supposes a *Self-Moving Faculty*, which is the Point in dispute, and then argues that 'tis not *Passive*. If what we call *Action* were in truth *Action*, the very Term is an Exclusion of *Necessity*; but it behoved the Doctor, before he introduced an Idea, which, when applied to Man, has no Foundation, to have proved that Man is not perpetually *acted* on; for what we term *Action* in the Soul, is no more *Action* in the strict Sense of the Word, than

a Body in *Motion* can justly be said to *Move*, (as shall be demonstrated anon.) From whence I think it undeniably follows, that *Judgment* and *Action* (such as we are capable of) cannot justly be infer'd to depend on Principles totally different from each other, as *Activeness* and *Passiveness* are.

Secondly.

Tho' the *final Perception of the Understanding* in Man, and what the Doctor calls his *Self-moving Faculty*, were Physically connected, yet there would be *Action* (strictly so call'd) in the Universe. To deny the First Cause to be an *Agent* is a Contradiction in Terms. Our Knowledge is too imperfect to account for the Manner in which the *Deity acts*; but surely it is no just Consequence, that because our Actions are determined by the Last Judgment of the Understanding, and therefore necessary, that his are so too; That were to prove things we are in the dark about, by other things still farther removed from our Comprehension.

I shall now endeavour to demonstrate, ^{*Actions necessary.*} that the *Action* of the Soul is a necessarily determin'd, and immediate Consequence of the Last Judgment of the Understanding.

We are unacquainted with the Nature of the Substance of the Soul, but are conscious of its Affections and Operations; and therefore in our explaining them in order to make our Sentiments intelligible to others, we are reduced to the Necessity of drawing Parallels from *Matter*; but in this Particular, exact Care must be taken to make them adequate, for omission whereof, this Argument hath been placed in variety of false Lights. I will therefore, with the utmost Perspicuity I can, state my *Hypothesis*, and then prove it.

The *Soul is Acted upon by Ideas*, as *Hypothesis*.
Matter is by *Matter*. As the different Application of one Part of *Matter* to another determines its various *Modes*, so
the

the *Perception of Ideas* determines and Actuates the Soul.

*Hypothesis
proved.*

That this *Hypothesis* is true, I thus prove.

First.

Matter is capable of receiving different *Modes*, so is the *Soul* various *Affections*.

Secondly.

A *Particle of Matter*, tho' it admits of various *Modes*, is identically the same *Substance*; so is the *Soul*, notwithstanding its receiving variety of *Affections*.

Thirdly.

Matter would remain in one determin'd *Mode*, if no other Part of *Matter* were applied to alter it: so would the *Soul* be perpetually employ'd by one *Affection*, unless some *intervening Idea* diverted its Operation. If this be denied by the bare Assertion, that it has a *Self-motive Faculty* of determining its own Operations, that proves nothing. We should justly ridicule a Man who asserted that a Machine in Motion was an Agent, tho' he saw not the Weight or Spring that occasion'd it to move, or were ignorant in

in the Laws of Gravitation or Attraction : And we may with equal Propriety pronounce him absurd, who not truly contemplating the Causes that communicate Motion to the Soul, or because he is not able to delineate the precise manner of that Communication, should therefore assert the Soul to be Self-motive, which he is still less able to account for and reconcile to Reason.

The *Application of Matter to Matter* is *Fourthly*. so far the Cause of its changing its *Pristine Mode*, as without it 'twould not have received a new one : so the Application of an *Idea* to the *Soul* is the Cause of its receiving a particular *Affection* which otherwise 'twould not have been conscious of. When any Person can explain to me how *Material Objects* operate on the *Soul*, I then undertake to give a precise Description how Ideas exert the Soul to *Action* : I have as clear an Idea of the one as the other, am equally conscious that my *Soul* is *Acted* upon by *Ideas*, as that my *Body* is *Actuated* by my *Soul*.

If

If these *Premises* be admitted true, the Consequence which unavoidably follows, is, that the *Soul is Acted by the Last Judgment of the Understanding.*

But should my Hypothesis be Erroneous (which I can't see) I thus demonstrate that the Soul Acts necessarily.

Soul prov'd to act necessarily. It is admitted by my Opponents that the *Soul is Passive* until and in its *Last Judgment.* And if so, when the *Soul* has determin'd the Truth of any Proposition, or the Fitness of any Action, it is then going to enter upon ;

First. The *Action* either instantaneously follows that *Last Judgment of the Understanding.* Or,

Secondly. There is a *Suspension of Thought* for some time, and then the *Soul* is exerted to *Action*, in Correspondence with the *Last Judgment of the Understanding.* Or,

The

The Soul acts independent of, and ^{Thirdly} unaffected by any *Prior Judgment of the Understanding*.

One of these three must be the Case, and in each of them the *Action is Necessary*.

If, as by the *First Supposition*, the *Action* ^{First Sup-} instantaneously follows the *Last* ^{position.} *Judgment*, that *Action* is as evidently the Consequence of the *Last Judgment*, as the *Perception of an Object* is the unavoidable Result of the Object's affecting the Soul, which is acknowledg'd *Necessary*.

If the *Second Supposition* be true, the *Action* ^{Second Sup-} is without doubt the Consequence ^{position.} of the *Last Judgment of the Soul* before that Suspension of Thought; or a *New Judgment form'd on the Old Premises*, which must still be allow'd the *Last Judgment of the Understanding*.

D

If

*Third Sup-
position.*

If the Soul acts independent of any Prior Judgment of the Understanding, its Action is Involuntary (having nothing to determine it) and consequently Necessary. This Supposition admits the Soul to be Conscious, 'tis beginning an *Action*, without any consideration to determine it to any particular *Manner of Acting*, or any reason why it should do, rather than abstain from it. This is admitting *Necessity* in its utmost *Latitude*. In order to evade this Dilemma it hath been said by some, that the *Last Judgment of the Understanding* is not the *Efficient Cause* of the Soul's *Acting*, but is admitted to be *Causa sine qua non*, which is enough to maintain my Argument that the Soul is necessitated to every particular *Action*, as in my *Hypothesis* is stated and proved.

I will put an Instance of *Action* in the most favourable light I can for *Liberty* in Man.

A Person judges it best for him to *Walk*, and in order to prove that he has a Liberty of Acting in direct Opposition to that *Last Judgment*, he sits still. 'Tis plain the Person is *Necessitated* so to do from the influencing Pleasure he receives from that *Act*, which compels him to abstain from what he before thought reasonable; which Preference is in reality the *Last Judgment of the Soul*, and is necessary, in regard it was occasioned by some intervening Idea, which necessarily presented itself to his View.

'Tis thought by the Assertors of *Free Will* a debasing the Soul to make it *Passive*. It is (say they) levelling it with a Ballance endued with Perception, without a Power of beginning Motion. To this I answer: The Soul of Man, tho' it be *Necessitated* to *Action* by the *Last Judgment of the Understanding*, yet is vastly superior in degree to that of other Animals, likewise endued with *Perception* and other *Faculties*. Its Prehemi-

nence consists, in that 'tis *Acted* upon in a more *Diversified Manner* than theirs, its *Faculties* are more extensive ; and in this alone (I conceive) consists the *Essential Distinction* between the Soul of Man, and that of the Brute, at least in this Terrestrial State. Besides, wherein lies the Difference with regard to me ? or whether is the more eligible Condition of Humanity, In the one Case the Almighty is pleas'd to allot me a *Determined* Share of each ; and in the other I am indued with a Power of procuring the one, or pulling down the other, on my own Head ?

*Free Will
contended
for by Di-
vines, to
account for
the Origin
of Evil.*

The Doctrine of *Free Will* is strenuously asserted by Divines, in order to account for the *Origin of Evil* ; but I conceive 'tis far from answering that end, as will appear from the following Considerations.

First.

If a Being Omnipotent and Omniscient permits an *Action*, from which he could have restrain'd, (that being implied
in

LIBERTY *and* NECESSITY.

21

in his Attribute of Omnipotence) he, by the Negation of that restrictive Power, is the Cause of the *Action*. The Prescience of the *Deity* penetrated at one View through all Futurity, and instantaneously determined the Propriety of the whole System of Created Beings. His Works, in regard to him, don't attain Perfection from a Succession of Times and Causes, but may be said to be completed in the very Act of Volition.

When all Beings, animate and inani-*Secondly.*
mate, proceeded from the *First Cause*, they were indued with every Qualification necessary to fulfil the respective ends for which they were created. If this were not true, 'twould be an Argument of Imperfection in the Deity, which is a Contradiction to suppose.

As every Being was furnish'd by the *Thirdly.*
Deity with every thing necessary for answering the end of its Creation, 'tis erroneous to suppose it should not fulfil that end the Almighty intended it for; and that

that by such Steps and Means as were pre-ordain'd for its Progress by the Great Orderer of all things. To admit that any Created Being can *Act* in a Manner contrary to what it does, or fulfil any other end, is, I apprehend, tantamount to allowing it to be independent of the Deity, and consequently to have it in its Election and Power to thwart the Schemes of the great Author and Superintendant of all things, and thereby to bring *Good* and *Evil* on itself, and the rest of the Creation.

The Doctrine of the *Necessity of Human Actions* is unattended with all the Absurdities that of *Free Will* labours under, since it is intended to prove no more than what every unprejudiced Man without Argument will assent to. That each Being *Acts* the Part which his Creator brought him on the Stage to perform. What Contradiction more irreconcilable, than that any thing should resist his Will, for whose *Good Pleasure*, and by whose Power

LIBERTY *and* NECESSITY.

23

Power alone 'twas Created, and in
whom *Allthings Live, Move, and have*
their Being, and who is well pleas'd
with the Works of his Hands.

The E N D.



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TOWN OF NEW YORK
WHICH WAS GIVEN BY
THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK



THE NEW YORK



